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# WHY THE PRESS FAILED ON SPAIN!

by

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## Foreword

By REVEREND EDWARD LODGE CURRAN, PH.D.

*Since the revolt of the Spanish People against the Red Loyalist Government, which forced its way into power by the violent and fraudulent elections of February, 1936, many pamphlets have been written about Spain.*

*The revolt of the Spanish Nationalists opened in the month of July, 1936. Step by step the Nationalists under the magnificent leadership of General Franco have rescued Spain from the bloody tyranny of the Leftist forces of the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona dictatorship.*

*For years the American Press has boasted of its devotion to fair play and to impartiality. We have witnessed, however, the transformation of too many members of the American Press into a propaganda machine for the Red Cause of the Red Loyalists in Spain.*

*These members of the American Press have lost the right even to be considered accurate. When the press of the rest of the world had repudiated the malicious lies about the supposed massacres in Badajos and about the supposed desecration of the holy (?) city of Guernica, much of the American Press continued to repeat the slanders.*

*We consider this pamphlet to be one of the most important yet produced on the Spanish affair. It will warn all American readers against the biased reports served to them on a propaganda platter and falsely included on the literary menu as "news."*

*The Catholic Church does not fear truth. It fears half-truths and prejudice. Father Thorning's pamphlet is the whole truth. Father Thorning has earned the gratitude of the American nation as a whole for writing it.*

## WHY THE PRESS FAILED ON SPAIN!

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IN the first place, it is just to acknowledge that the great metropolitan journals and international news services printed most of the important material which proved the close connection between Moscow and Madrid. On November 1, for example, both the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald-Tribune* gave detailed descriptions of the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona celebration of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Union of Socialist and Soviet Republics. Furthermore, both the Associated Press and the United Press laid profound stress upon the significance of the Anarchist and Syndicalist movements in Catalonia. The reporting of William P. Carney, especially as exemplified in the despatch to the *New York Times* on December 7, 1936, showed a high degree of journalistic responsibility and personal courage. It should be noted that he confined himself to straight news stories and never allowed himself to become a propagandist either for Largo Caballero or Generalissimo Francisco Franco.

On the other hand, the *New York Times* kept Herbert L. Matthews as its special correspondent in Madrid long after he had abandoned any pretense to serve as anything more or less than a rabid Red partisan. To prove this, one has merely to contrast the stories of Mr. Matthews with the impressions of the Socialist leader, Sam Baron (*New York Times*, November 15, 1937) or with the tenor of despatches of independent observers that have appeared in the *New York Times* from time to time (e.g., *New York Times*, November 9, 1937).

Upon analysis the reports of Mr. Matthews are revealed as



nine-tenths "interpretations" of official policy or "human interest" narratives of events behind the Red front. He has earned the sobriquet of the "Walter Duranty of Red Spain." To tell the truth, this is a reflection upon Duranty because the latter has almost invariably retained an apparent detachment in his despatches from Moscow. Incidentally, the contradiction between what Walter Duranty really saw and believed and what he put on the wires to the *New York Times* is graphically described by that well-known one-time representative of the United Press in Russia, Eugene Lyons, in his brilliant study, *Assignment in Utopia*. Duranty himself plunged into the Spanish whirlpool and wrote some stories from Catalonia that make interesting museum-pieces today. A number of his confident predictions failed to come true, and so he is no longer writing as he pleases about Spain.

### The Lies About Badajoz

The false report of the "massacre" of Badajoz has been so frequently and so thoroughly pulverized that it may seem strange to repeat the refutation. I intend to address myself briefly to this task because no less an author than John Gunther, eager to exploit the latest development in the international arena, wrote a special chapter on Spain in the new edition of his book, *Inside Europe*. This chapter gives no indication that John Gunther has been "inside Spain," at least since the outbreak of hostilities. Inasmuch as Mr. Gunther's volume has achieved a place on the best-seller list in the non-fiction field, it may be worth while to examine some of his statements about Badajoz and other alleged atrocities of the Nationalists.

Mr. Gunther writes as follows (p. 174): "Previously, at Badajoz on the Portuguese border, 4,000 loyalist civilians and militia-men were captured by Franco's men and machine-gunned in the bull-ring."

There is no excuse for this rehearsal of falsehood because, prior to the publication of the refurbished edition of *Inside*

*Europe*, the legend of Badajoz has been completely demolished by Major Geoffrey McNeill-Moss in his thrilling narrative, *The Siege of the Alcazar*. Major McNeill-Moss shows how the "massacre" of Badajoz was announced to the American public under the signature of N. Reynolds Packard, the well-known correspondent of the United Press. In a valuable appendix (No. 2, pp. 305-313) the British officer records Mr. Packard's own repudiation of the story given to the English-speaking world under his name.

The authenticity of the report was also denied by Webb Miller, the European news manager of the United Press, in a letter he wrote to *The Manchester Guardian*. Major McNeill-Moss subjects to careful analysis two other despatches about the same incident (pp. 118-123) and then clinches the case with the testimony of Captain Francis McCullagh, a correspondent whose integrity is above cavil. The words of Captain McCullagh are emphatic (p. 123): "I went thoroughly into that question and satisfied myself that no Red who surrendered at Badajoz was shot. \* \* \* I have been unable to find any Englishman or American who saw with his own eyes any shooting of unarmed men by the nationalists."\*

### Deliberate Fictions

As early as April, 1937, Douglas Jerrold, writing in *The Nineteenth Century*, added this impressive testimony: "The 'massacre' at Badajoz I knew to be a lie, because it was announced in the French Press of the Left two days before Badajoz fell. \* \* \* Mr. Jerrold does not hesitate to say that this example is "only one in an unbroken series of deliberately invented fictions which have been foisted on the English and American public."

The point to be noted is that all this testimony was available to John Gunther when he undertook to write his chapter on

\* The story of Mr. Jay Allen may be disregarded inasmuch as he himself acknowledges that he arrived eight days late. Cf. *From Spanish Trenches*, edited by Marcel Acier, pp. 3-8.



the war in Spain. Even a perfunctory desire or search for the truth would have led him inevitably to the book of Major McNeill-Moss and the articles of Douglas Jerrold. Mr. Gunther did not give a single hint that would help an unsuspecting reader to explore the question further. In his recital there is not the echo of a doubt or misgiving about the lie which he is propagating. In the supposition that he accepted the original unreliable reports about Badajos, would not he, a responsible journalist who makes bold to embody his views of current history in a book, be obligated to indicate, at least in a foot-note, that his sources were under fire and that an analysis of the available evidence might be found in a previously published volume?

It is possible that Mr. Gunther did not know about the repudiations of the Badajos slaughter signed by N. Reynolds Packard and Webb Miller. It is possible that he did not read *The Siege of the Alcazar*. If this is his defense for the propagation of falsehood, it is nothing more or less than a plea of culpable ignorance. If, as seems more likely, he had some inkling of the doubt that had been cast upon the original story, he can hardly be credited with a very high degree of intellectual honesty.

### Even Reviewers Nod

Of course, every atrocity story accumulates blood in its dissemination. The Badajos "massacre" is no exception. Ramon Sender in *Counter-Attack in Spain* (p. 123) speaks about the 14,000 murders committed by Franco in Navarre, the 30,000 shot in Badajos, the 27,000 in Granada. . . . These reckless statements escaped the eye of the reviewer (Charles Poore) in the *New York Times* because *Counter-Attack in Spain* is a book for which he had nothing but unqualified praise (November 12, 1937). The least critical reviewer, had he read the volume, would have pointed out that the figure of 30,000 murders at Badajos was a 26,000 increment over the 4,000 victims claimed by Gunther.

Consistency is not one of John Gunther's strong features. In his highly eulogistic introduction to M. W. Fodor's *Plot and Counter-Plot in Central Europe* he writes as follows: "Fodor is here. \* \* \* He has the most peculiar comprehensive knowledge of central Europe of any journalist I know; all Europe for that matter." This fulsome praise is repeated on the jacket blurb of Fodor's book.

### Russia in Spain

Now let us compare the information communicated by John Gunther with that furnished by M. W. Fodor. In *Inside Europe* Gunther makes the blunt statement (p. 176): "No Russian troops arrived in Spain. \* \* \* " On the other hand, Fodor, the omniscient, is rather explicit (p. 293): "The Russian Army has changed. As the Spanish war revealed, it is one of the best-equipped and best-trained of armies, and it has the largest air force in the world." Either Gunther or Fodor is mistaken. Both cannot be infallible on Spain.

It is far more interesting and more important to contrast one of the claims of John Gunther, the Walter Winchell of the European scene, with the facts presented by Captain Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, in the House of Commons. In his chapter on Spain, Gunther (p. 183) describes the Non-Intervention agreement as a "monstrous fiction." He then adds: "This was an almost fatal handicap to the loyalists. They could get nothing in from France and not much from the U.S.S.R. But Italy and Germany sent great quantities of arms and men to Spain before the pact was signed, and after its signature it seemed that they violated it almost at will."

Answering David Lloyd George in Parliament Foreign Secretary Eden declared (*New York Times*, November 1, 1937): "The result of Nyon has been to facilitate the arrival of very large quantities of material arriving in Spanish Government ports. Of course there have been enormous quantities of material arriving



at Spanish Government ports throughout the year. Official Soviet Government figures show that Spain now is Soviet Russia's third best customer. From January to September of this year Russia shipped to Spain nearly 10 times as much in weight and four and one-half times as much in value as during the corresponding period in 1936. During the summer months of this year I could not stand at this box and tell the House that during that period there was more material reaching the Insurgent forces than was reaching the Government forces." The difference between the two statements is simply that Gunther drew upon his imagination and Eden levied tribute upon the trade reports of the Soviet Union.

Confident assertion is one thing; the establishment of proof another. Mr. Gunther utilizes the first method when he writes (p. 166): "It is now established beyond any doubt that German and Italian intervention occurred months before Russian help reached Spain." It would be useful to have the evidence upon which this assertion is based. John Gunther does not support his statements with fact; nor does any other author I have studied. Early in September the *Gazette de Lausanne*, noted for the soundness of its news and of its editorial views, published considerable evidence to show that the Italian and German help to Franco had to be hastily improvised due to the fact that Mussolini and Hitler were taken by surprise by the speed and weight of Russian intervention.

### **Diplomat Blames Moscow**

Similar testimony, even more convincingly presented, is given by Sir Francis Lindley, G.C.M.G., C.B., former British Ambassador to Japan. In an article, "The Tragedy of Spain," published in *The National Review* (February, 1937), Sir Francis traces the origin of Soviet intervention to its ideology of exploiting every "revolutionary situation." The British diplomat declares: "The plain fact is clear to all who wish to see. The

Spanish civil war would have been a purely internal affair had it not been for Moscow. No other Power would have had either reason or wish to intervene. Once the Bolsheviks set the example, others were certain to come in on the opposite side. And it is a delusion to believe that, with no foreign intervention, the Government would have won. With Spaniards left to themselves everything points to a swift victory outside Catalonia for General Franco, who had at his disposal all the trained forces and the military skill of the country."

Edward H. Knoblaugh of the Associated Press, who was in an excellent position to judge, assures us (p. 174) that "the foreign assistance Loyalist Spain was receiving was successfully minimized while that given the enemy assumed staggering proportions." The same writer estimated that the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona Government has about 110,000 Russians, French, German, Italian, American, Polish, English, Czech and Bulgarian volunteers fighting on its side. Of these, about 35,000 were killed, leaving some 75,000 still fit for service. (*Correspondent in Spain*, Edward H. Knoblaugh, p. 217). This estimate is confirmed by Brig.-Gen. P. R. C. Groves of *The Observer* (London).

### **The Lies About Guernica**

The crowning achievement of Red propaganda, however, was the report of the destruction of the ancient Basque holy city of Guernica. Gunther accepts the story at its face value. He writes as follows (pp. 176-177): "German aviators bombed and destroyed Guernica, the holy city of the Basques, the first instance in history of the complete and willful obliteration of a whole city, non-combatants as well as fighters, by bombing and machine-gunning from the air." In this case Mr. Gunther is able to cite as his authority, G. L. Steer of *The Times*, London. The latter, as we know from his own admission, was eight and one-half miles from the scene of the event he attempted to relate. He has been contradicted by *The London Times* correspondent who was with the Nationalist forces.



The Havas Agency and a committee of international correspondents who investigated the report positively affirmed that most of the damage they saw was wrought by deliberate destruction by fires from the ground. The damage done by Franco's planes was insignificant in comparison with the havoc perpetrated by gasoline flames kindled by Spanish anarchists in their retreat. It should also be noted that Guernica was the site of an arms factory, just as Eibar, and a military position in the path of an advancing army. The Steer despatch was at best an inadequate and misleading story.

Here again, the Reds are convicted by the character of their own propaganda. The Spanish Embassy in Washington has published thousands of brochures with pictures purporting to show the destruction wrought by German bombs in Guernica. The "pièce de résistance" of this exhibit, occupying the center pages of the brochure, is a picture of rows upon rows of upright walls, roofless and blackened. The photograph is a "fake." It may be a picture of Verdun or St. Quentin immediately after the World War, but it is not a reproduction of anything in Guernica. Other photographs in the same brochure, actually taken on the spot, prove nothing except that the principal damage was done by incendiarism and not by bombs. As Douglas Jerrold points out, in a case of this kind the outside walls of a bombed house will never be left intact. The pock-marks left on the streets of Guernica due to exploding bombs are relatively few compared to the unmistakable scars inflicted by fire.

### **A Hitherto Unpublished Telegram**

Immediately upon receipt of the initial report by Steer, both *The Times*, London, and the *New York Times* wrote editorial denunciations of German fliers and General Franco. Within a few days *The Times*, London, had reason to suspect the accuracy of the Steer report and sent him the following hitherto undisclosed telegram, of which I submit a photostatic copy:

ORD 88 LONDON 16 4 1251  
STEER HOTEL TORRONTGUI BILBAO  
VIEW OTHER SIDES DISMISSAL YOUR GUERNICA STORY  
FURTHER JUDICIOUS STATEMENT DESIRABLE—TIMES

The *New York Times* still has to make an "amende honorable" for three savagely partisan editorials about the Guernica affair.\*

Nor has Senator William E. Borah retracted his widely publicized speech on Guernica, a statement that was obviously based on one-sided information. It is to be regretted that the Senator does not show the same commendable zeal in tracing down the truth on this episode, so important in the sphere of Red propaganda, as he displayed in demonstrating the facts about George Washington's sentiments with respect to foreign relations. When the Senator is correct, he is eager to discover the truth; when he is mistaken, as he certainly was in the case of Guernica, he takes refuge in silence. He assumed the responsibility of making the U.S. Senate a sounding-board for the dissemination of a one-sided and partisan distortion of the news.

### **The Propaganda Machine**

Most competent newspaper correspondents are now aware of how woefully the public was deceived about Guernica. Edward H. Knoblauch, an Associated Press writer of considerable reputation, describes the workings of the Red propaganda machine in his recent book entitled *Correspondent in Spain*. He dismisses the incident in a single paragraph:

"The bombing of the Basque town of Guernica was one of the most fortunate bits of material for the propaganda machine. Guernica had an arms factory. It was used as a Loyalist military base, and it was in the path of Franco's march on Bilbao. But the government propaganda workers exploited the fact that Gu-

\* Following *The Times* (London), which published a repudiation of the original Guernica report (December 14, 1937), the *New York Times* on December 27 acknowledged Guernica had been destroyed "upon evacuation."



ernica had a venerated oak tree in a central plaza. The bombardment became 'an atrocious attack on the defenseless, holy city of the Basques'. It aroused such a wave of indignation abroad that not even the joint statement of disinterested correspondents, testifying that the principal damage had been caused by anarchist incendiaries and Asturian dynamiters before they evacuated Guernica, carried much weight."

Russell Palmer, a prominent publisher who is both a Protestant and a Mason, made a special investigation to determine what happened at Guernica. He reports to us in these words (N.C.W.C. News Service despatch as it appeared in the *Brooklyn Tablet*, November 20, 1937):

"I explored the ruins of Guernica very exhaustively and believe that anyone who does so will come to the same conclusion that I did, viz., that the town was dynamited by retreating Basques. I took a number of photographs of Guernica which showed damage which could not possibly have been effected from the air."

### Still Fall for Lies

The responsibility of the press for the fable of Guernica is the greater when we consider that after 10 months of experience the newspapers and news agencies had discovered plenty of reason to suspect the propaganda bulletins put forth by the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona Government. Every one of these newspapers printed the false reports about the capture of the Alcázar. On July 29, 1936, Madrid announced the surrender of this fortress. A communiqué informed Europe that the Nationalists, crowded into the underground structure, had given up all resistance. "They gave themselves up"—the communiqué reported—"after a last warning from the governmental forces, who had menaced them with another attack. Officers and Civil Guards came out of the fortress, unarmed, in groups of five. Complete order has been established in Toledo." (*The Siege of the Alcazar*. By Henri Massis and Robert Brasillach, p. 24). The truth, as the

whole world now knows, was quite different. And yet the American newspapers continued to be deceived.

Actual evidence has little influence upon "special writers" who come to Spain to find material to fit their pre-conceived ideas. They are blind to unpleasant realities and invent excuses for the most obvious brutalities of the Anarchistic elements. One of this type visited Mr. Knoblaugh with a view to getting some help for his series of feature articles. Confessing his utter ignorance of the Spanish language and of Spanish customs, he asked the Associated Press man to guide him through the mazes of necessary background material. His first question was:

"What can you tell me about the reported killing of Rightist non-combatants behind the lines—these 'ride' victims we have read about?"

Knoblaugh reported the well-known facts. Unfortunately, more than 50,000 innocent citizens of Madrid had been killed by the Reds without trial.

"I don't believe it!" shouted the feature writer. "Nothing anyone can tell me will make me believe it. I think you must be a Fascist!"

### Newspapermen Muzzled

As a result, the veteran newspapermen, those who won their spurs in the pre-war days in Spain, have one by one found the climate unhealthy under the new regime. Their familiarity with the language and the habits of the people, their carefully built up circle of news contacts, and their knowledge of political personages and happenings made it difficult for the government to reduce them to servitude. Their long experience in the peninsula would not permit them to accept statements directly at variance with their trained judgment and personal observation. Since they could not be "co-ordinated" with the new sources of news, they were either rendered practically useless to their employers by a succession of petty privations or else sharply warned



that the police would no longer be responsible for their personal safety.

If a newspaperman in this distressing situation received adequate support from his home office, he might have been able to take the added risks which attend truth-telling.

He is not inclined to invite reprisals when he knows that the men who publish or edit his paper in the United States are eager to feature Popular Front victories (*Correspondent in Spain*, Edward H. Knoblauch, p. 198).\*

A striking example of this attitude is to be found in the files of the *New York Times*. As soon as G. L. Steer put his Guernica story on the wires, the editorial board of the *Times* was hard at work on an editorial excoriating the Nationalists under the inflammatory heading, Mass Murder in Guernica. On May 1, a second editorial branded the alleged bombing as a "climax of cruelty. \* \* \*" The final editorial blast came on May 7, long after every responsible editor in New York and London had ample reason to doubt the misleading report of Mr. Steer. The latter knew well enough that the three editorials reflected the attitude of the men who were paying him. If he hadn't suspected where the sympathies of his employers lay before this date, he could easily conclude that in their eyes at least the Guernica incident "si non é vero, é ben trovato."

Knoblauch relates that the first cabled "bouquet" which reached him from his New York office was a hurried re-write of a prepared article that he had received from the Red propaganda bureau. "The queer feeling I had upon receiving this message," he writes, "may be better understood if I add that, despite our

\* Sometimes the treatment is subtle. An article by Miss Virginia Cowles in the *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1938, was entitled "Behind the Fighting Fronts in the Two Clashing Spains." Upon analysis the essay discloses that Miss Cowles briefly visited only San Sebastian and Santander in the Nationalist territory, although she had obviously spent considerable time in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. What about Seville, Malaga, Salamanca, Bilbao, Granada and Valladolid?

months of hard and dangerous work at the fronts, and despite innumerable 'scoops' won by painstakingly cultivating scores of contacts on the possibility of a sometime return on our investment of time and money, this was the first such message any of us in the Madrid bureau had received since the beginning of the war." (*Correspondent in Spain*, Edward H. Knoblauch, p. 178). It would be a dull reporter who would not learn a lesson from such an experience.

### Privileges for Favorites

Some of the correspondents in Red Spain get along famously with the authorities. There are privileges for those who broadcast the government point of view. It is natural to want to please those with whom one lives and associates. The sharper the competition for the news, the more important it is not to be exposed to delays in matters of housing, food, censorship, cable and telephone facilities. The "objective" correspondent can be penalized in a hundred covert ways. It is hard to see a rival admitted to the front line trenches during or after a battle, to read the thrilling "human interest" stories that are the fruit of fraternization with officers and men, to realize that your home office is daily becoming disappointed at the lack of local color in your own despatches.

On the other hand, the price of favors is conformity. The moment a correspondent shows that he is willing to be a rubber stamp for the Popular Front hand-outs, he is a welcome guest at many interesting conclaves; passes are provided for the most advanced positions; the assignment in Madrid turns into a series of wonderfully pleasant adventures. But should he show his ingratitude, as Edward H. Knoblauch reports, by putting into practice "the fine old American newspaper tradition of investigating and corroborating the government's news reports before sending them, there will be rough weather ahead." (*Correspondent in Spain*, Edward H. Knoblauch, p. 190). Knoblauch himself as well as William P. Carney, Roland Winn (Reuter's),



John Allwork (Reuter's), and Jane Anderson, an American freelance writer, are only a few who escaped assassination in the course of their conscientious performance of duty in Red Spain.

Of course, some journalists need no persuasion to undertake the work of propaganda. Long before their appointment to Spain they were in the radical ranks and each day's work is a new opportunity for promoting the cause. A number in this category actually accept the status of "political agents." They help to create stories which are distributed by the Ministry of Propaganda to the neutral correspondents.

### Won Three Times Area of Spain

One correspondent took the pains to add up the officially reported "victories" of the Red government for the first eight months of the war. The results he portrayed were fantastic, showing that on paper the Madrid-Valencia-Barcelona Government had won territory totaling three times the complete area of Spain; killed or wounded about six times the total number of men General Franco had under arms and captured prodigious stores of artillery and munitions.\* The fact was that General Franco, according to William P. Carney, of the *New York Times*, waged his final campaign in the North with equipment seized from the enemy to the extent of 60 percent.

In another chapter of his book, *Correspondent in Spain* (p. 145), Edward H. Knoblauch relates that a summary of official Madrid announcements discloses that the Reds claim to have captured Huesca 26 times, Toledo 11 times and Oviedo 22 times. It would be tedious to rehearse the text of the communiqués which told of the collapse of Saragossa, Granada, Cordoba and Avila. As a matter of fact, once the Nationalists had gained possession of these cities, they were never dislodged, even momen-

\* Summing up the year in Spain at the end of 1937, the *New York Times* complacently remarked that Bilbao was the only important Nationalist success in twelve months, overlooking or ignoring the capture of the rich province and city of Malaga early in the year.

tarily. Nevertheless, the Reds continued to boast of their "successes" at these points and prevailed upon the newspapermen to relay their fabrications to the United States. That is why few editors can study their files from July 18, 1936, to December 1, 1937, without feelings of shame and confusion. If this seems like an extreme conclusion, let it be compared with the remark of Eugene F. Lyons in *Assignment in Utopia*, where he speaks of the "manicured mendacities provided by the daily press." The American press in particular has confirmed the accuracy of Mr. Lyon's observation.

### Money No Object to Reds

"Money is no object" has been the slogan of the Red propaganda machine. Few publicity bureaus can reduce a slogan like this to action, but in the case of Madrid it was simplicity itself. The Reds in seizing the gold reserve of the Bank of Spain gave themselves an initial advantage of more than \$700,000,000 over their Nationalist opponents. Although sections of this immense sum were earmarked for individuals and put aside as private bank accounts in foreign parts, there was a large residue available for the purposes of propaganda. For months the streams of gold literally flowed into every venal editorial office in Europe. I have related in the November *Catholic World* my own experience with a special representative of the "Universal," the greatest daily newspaper in Rumania. This gentleman, Mr. Ian Popovici, told me that the Madrid government offered to pay all expenses for journalists who would come from Rumania to Spain. My Rumanian friend assured me that a number of his fellow countrymen were unable to resist the lure of this bait. It is easy to imagine the type of stories that would emanate from subsidized foreign correspondents.

Constructively, much may be done to give the American public a true picture of conditions on both sides in Spain. Why should there not be a daily special despatch from General Franco's headquarters or some other point of major interest



behind the Nationalist front? The "Reuter's" man in Spain told me that articles of this kind were followed with eager attention by readers in Europe and throughout the British Empire. Why should the feature spot be reserved for the despatches of Herbert L. Matthews morning after morning? Why were the reports of William P. Carney kept for many months on the inside page or in a subordinate place, especially after the facts he produced were rarely called into question? In recent weeks, perhaps, due to many protests against the obvious disproportion of news printed from the two sides, there has been a more equitable attitude displayed in the columns of the *New York Times*. It is possible that the editorial board did not realize how obvious its partisanship had become and how easily its illiberality could be checked and verified.\*

### Bias of Newspapers

Regrettably, a large number of publishers and editors have allowed their antipathy for (or valid grievances against) Hitler and Mussolini to influence their judgment in the placing and spacing of news. It is no mere accident that the newspapers conspicuous by their bias, both editorially and journalistically, have been the *New York Times* (publisher, Arthur Hays Sulzberger), the *Washington Post* (publisher, Eugene F. Meyer), the *St. Louis Post-Despatch* (publisher, Joseph F. Pulitzer, Jr.), and the *Philadelphia Record* (publisher, J. David Stern).

Other publishers would do well to scrutinize the handiwork of their headline writers. A number of Hearst papers, for example, blazed the Madrid-inspired report that Bruno Mussolini had bombed the British ship, *Jean Weems*, across the front page. The next day, no verification of the report could be obtained.

\* As the war apparently draws to a victorious conclusion for the Nationalists both the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald-Tribune*, chagrined by the trend of events, allowed their correspondents to redouble their efforts to put a favorable complexion on the Red "Victorious Retreat" from Teruel.

This item was carried in an obscure foot-note. There is no news in a denial. The damage had been done; the mind of the public had been poisoned and no antidote was supplied.

Finally, the secular editors and publishers will do themselves and their readers a favor by a close acquaintanceship with the Catholic national magazines, reviews and weekly newspapers. In some communities the advantages of such a practice are becoming noticeable. The *Baltimore Sun*, for example, often quotes *The Catholic Review*. Stories from the *Brooklyn Tablet* are frequently cited in the New York metropolitan area. Our *Sunday Visitor* is an authentic news source, while the *Catholic Daily Tribune*, of Dubuque, the *Pittsburgh Observer*, the *Hartford Transcript*, the *Southwest Courier*, the *Denver Register*, the *San Francisco Monitor* and *Los Angeles Tidings* are increasingly utilized by editors in the East, Middle West and Far West.

If this trend continues, we may hope that editors in every large city will devote the same attention to the Catholic press that they now give to the pages of the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Christian Century*, *The Churchman*, *The Living Church*, various Masonic journals and the radical sheets. The achievements of Catholic editors and publishers are a rich contribution to the journalistic field. Their work on Spain alone has been enough to justify their existence and a more generous support of their subscription lists.

Able served by the N.C.W.C. News Service, the diocesan newspapers have been successful in securing accurate, adequate and attractive coverage for events in both zones of the Spanish civil war. *The Catholic World*, *The Sign*, *The Commonwealth*, *Light*, *Columbia* and *America* printed abundant material that was gathered by eye-witnesses of the scenes they described. Owen B. McGuire, Captain Francis McCullagh, Nena Belmonte, Aileen O'Brien, Arnold Lunn, Edward H. Knoblauch, Bernard Fay and Andrew F. Ferger wrote stories as authentic and colorful as any that issued from the fronts on North or South. Their reports will bear the test of history. The details these observers



relate were checked and verified. Adhering strictly to the facts, they did not need to dramatize themselves after the fashion of some modern reporters. As a result you may pick up the files of our diocesan papers or national magazines today and retrace the stream of events that led General Franco from his remote post on the Canary Islands to his headquarters in the heart of Old Castile.

The news, as reported in the Catholic press, may not always have been sensational, but it was correct. It was not a succession of splendid lies; nor a procession of "victories" which almost invariably ended in withdrawal, surrender or retreat. Catholic editors and publishers merit the compliment which Edward H. Knoblaugh paid to the Nationalist High Command at Salamanca: that never once were Franco's press officers responsible for the announcement or publication of false information. It is a satisfaction to know that at least one news syndicate did not succumb to what Sir Walter Maxwell-Scott called "the enormous power of modern propaganda," which has the "rest of the world absolutely hood-winked."

This Report would not be complete without a citation from the jubilant despatch of Herbert L. Matthews which was published in the *New York Times* on February 6, 1937. Mr. Matthews declared: "The battle of Teruel now appears to observers here to be over, and there are several important lessons to be learned from it." If I may be so bold, I would suggest that the most important lesson which Herbert L. Matthews, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, George Seldes and Leland Stowe can learn from the Teruel campaign as reported in the press is that so eloquently inculcated by Sophocles in the first chorus of his famous drama "Antigone," to wit, not "to raise the cry of victory until you've scaled the walls."